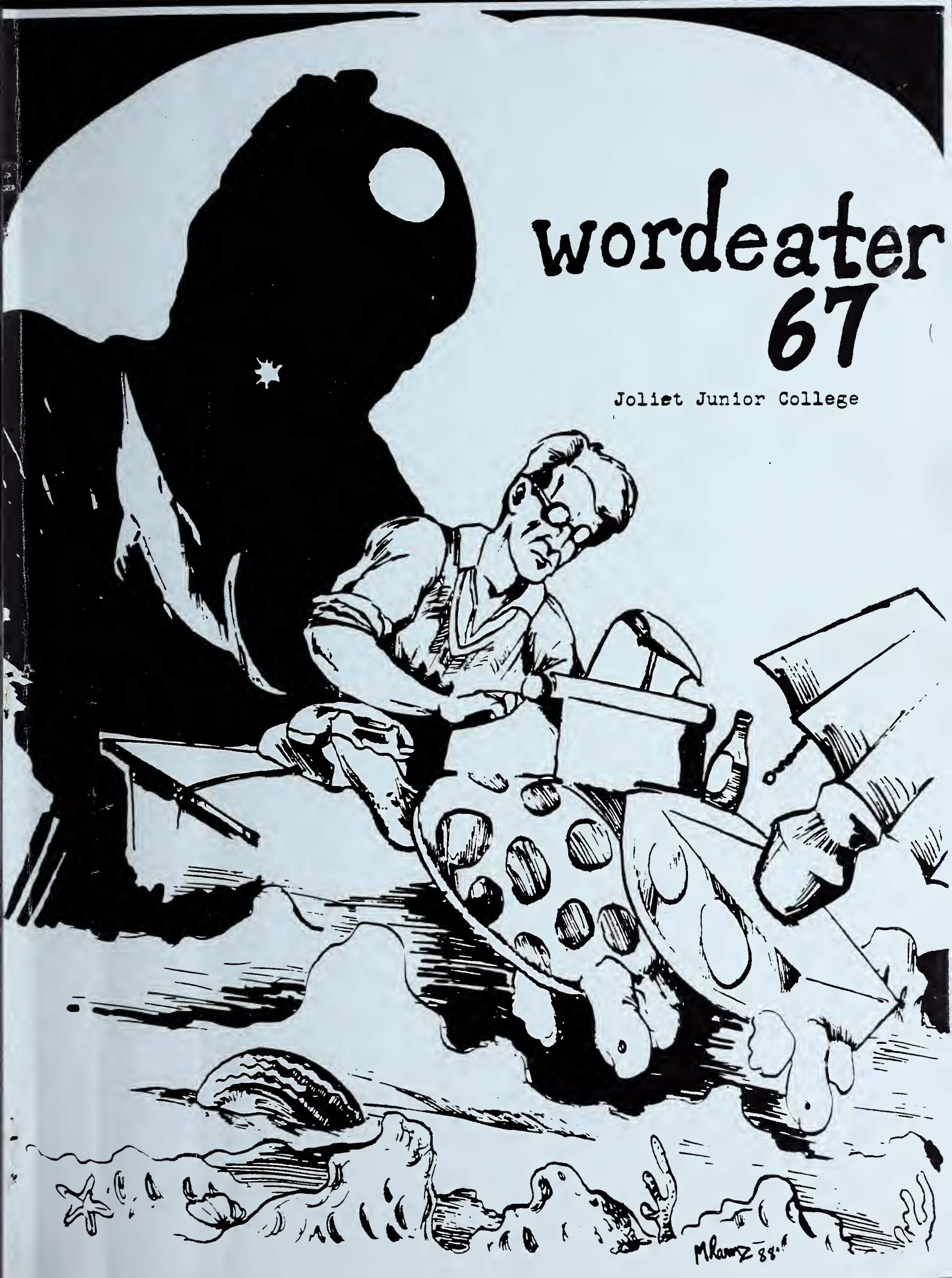
wordeater 67

Joliet Junior College



WARBEATER

#67

DEAR READERS:

Due to the sharp eyes of Wordeater readers, two students have been confronted with their having stolen words from published material and claiming them as original. These people are, therefore, being censured in this edition of Wordeater (See Letters of Apology below).

Undoubtedly, other students have succeeded in getting plagiarized material published in the seventeen years Wordeater has existed. However, no others have been caught by the staff or the readers. I appreciate the readers' helping us in our attempt to produce a high quality, honest publication.

Perhaps knowing that the staff considered over 400 submissions for Wordeater 67 gives the reader some idea of the difficulty of catching plagiarism before publication. We will try but obviously we sometimes fail.

Thanks Again,
John F. Stobart

DEAR WORDEATER STAFF:

I want to apologize for having submitted some material that wasn't original. I am hereby resigning from my position on the staff and ask for your forgiveness and understanding.

Thank you for your time.

MaryAnn DesMarais

TO WORDEATER READERS AND STAFF:

My sincere apologies for copying the words from "Pool Life" and "Losing It" from copyrighted lyrics. Again, my apologies to all of you.

Frank Sanchez

WORDEATER 67 STAFF:

Donna F. Aiello, Judy Belfield, Karen Lombardo, Maria Mellinger, Nels Nelson, John Stobart, David L. Sullivan

In order to get a selection published in this issue, four of the above had to vote for acceptance. For the award winners, only John Stobart is responsible.

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wordeater 67

Manuscripts or cover designs for WORDEATER 68 must be submitted to John Stobart in room C-1069 by: April 14, 1989
Manuscripts will not be returned and SHOULD BE TYPED.

NEXT DEADLINE:

APRIL 14, 1989

AWARDS~

Poetry $15 : Nels Nelson
$ 5 each: Elise Wylie Boucher
Amy Jo Junkins
Maria Mellinger
Betty Burns Zacate

Prose $20: Maria Mellinger

The cover designs appearing on WORDEATER 67 were accepted in the spring of 1988 for Wordeater 64. They were drawn by Michael Ramsey, and he was awarded $20 for them at that time. Since we had additional cover designs submitted for WORDEATER 67, we decided to use them as inside front and back covers.

Inside Front Cover/$10 to Anna Danbury

Inside Back Cover/$10 to Greg Forseth

wordeater 67

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Alice Pecararo	The Visit	1
Maria Mellinger	The Resurrection of the One-Page Essay	1
Alice Pecararo	The Quiet Man	2
Amy Jo	Cannibal Man	3
Nels Nelson	Drunk	4
Elise Wylie Boucher	Shadow Dancer	4
Erika Nelson	Attraction	4
Alice Pecararo	Hi!	5
Maria Mellinger	Jigsaw Puzzle Language	4
Nels Nelson	Strike It Up	5
David Sullivan	Pulldraw	5
Nels Nelson	Eyes Which (Are They the Windows to the Soul?)	5
Judy Belfield	Firelight Eyes	6
Nels Nelson	Caution	6
Nels Nelson	Don't Touch	6
Maria Mellinger	Fast Study	6
Maria Mellinger	Checked Into a Hotel	6
John Schmitz	The Uprising	7
Erika Nelson	Sperm & Smoke	7
Judy Belfield	Romance Existential	7
Kim Vollmer	God, Please Don't Melt	7
Maria Mellinger	What A Splendid Pleasure To Be Hated	7
Liz Hand	Take Some For Yourself	8
Nels Nelson	Down, Please	9
Nels Nelson	Grooving	10
Tim Pote	Together	10
Elise Wylie Boucher	To Your Back	10
Judy Belfield	Greek To Me	10
Brian Carlson	I'm Sick Of...	11
David Sullivan	Raped Freedom	11
Paul Pritchett	Strings	11
Paul Pritchett	Comic Book Love	11
Bob Loewe	Too Much of A Good Thing	12
David Sklowdowski	Near Fantasy	12
Judy Belfield	Deception	12
Erika Nelson	My Love Is Like That Red, Red Rose...	12
Wayne Ceranek	Delusions	12
Alice Pecararo	Retreat	13
Maria Mellinger	Alone	13
Maria Mellinger	Spread Your Tears	13
Maria Mellinger	There Is A Time	13
Maria Mellinger	I Was Walking Through the Time	13
Maria Mellinger	The Only Time	14
Brian Carlson	The New Testament to Declining Day	14
Michael Fazio	The Minds of the Past	14
Maria Mellinger	Dead Minutes	14
Betty Burns Zacate	Autumn III(Haiku Sequence)	14
Maria Mellinger	Distance Dies	15
Brian Carlson	Anything Long Distance	15
Jerald Janes	East of Elgin	15
Brian Carlson	Saratoga	16
Elise Wylie Boucher	In Prince Park/Prince Park #2	16

(continued)

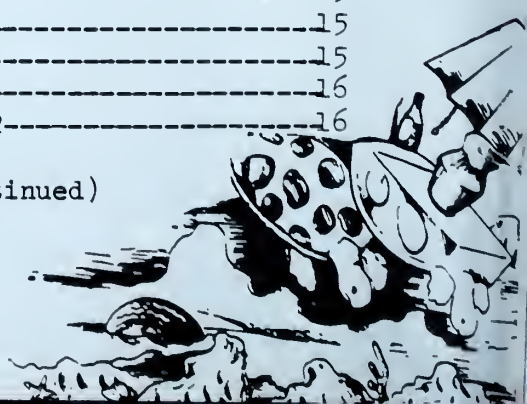


TABLE OF CONTENTS, continued

John Schmitz	No Room At the Zoo	17
Maria Mellinger	In The Corner	17
Nels Nelson	Abandoned in the Jungle	17
Elise Wylie Boucher	The Vole Curator	17
Maria Mellinger	The Bag Lady Down the Street	17
David Sullivan	Jackie K. O.	18
Brian Carlson	For Kerouac	18
David Sullivan	Philosophy 301	18
Alice Pecararo	Seeing	19
Nels Nelson	Is It True?	19
Brian Carlson	Somethings You Can't Figure Out	19
Nels Nelson	Life	20
Maria Mellinger	Name the Cause	20
Maria Mellinger	I Will Keep Your Soul Caged	20
Elise Wylie Boucher	The Souless Man	20
Michael Fazio	Why Do You Judge Me?	20
Amy Jo	Moods	20
Amy Jo	Boredom	21
Elise Wylie Boucher	Denial	21
Nels Nelson	Hope	21
Kim Vollmer	Restless	21
Nels Nelson	Formality	21
Nels Nelson	Pointless, But Great For A Moment	21
Brian Carlson	To Become the Other	22
Nels Nelson	Ridiculousness	22
Bob Loewe	Oddities	22
Maria Mellinger	After They Had Taken Her Away	22
Brian Carlson	Freud's Delight	22
Judy Belfield	To Abstraction	23
Michael Fazio	I Heard A Soft Mad Laugh	23
John Schmitz	Outside Himself	23
Amy Jo	Say It Bizarre	23
Kim Vollmer	Confusion	24
Elise Wylie Boucher	At the Crazy Horse	24
Bob Loewe	Welcome To the Black of My Mind	24
Amy Jo	Welcome To Hell	24
Wayne Ceranek	Savior	24
David Sullivan	God's Best Gift	24
Bob Loewe	Gratitude	25
John Schmitz	Evolution	25
Nels Nelson	It Happens Every Day	25
Anna Danbury	Adult Naivete	25
Amy Jo	Fountain of Youth	26
Karen Lombardo	Coming of Age	26
Elise Wylie Boucher	1979	27
Maria Mellinger	Records	27
Nels Nelson	Television	27
Amy Jo	Biere "33" Export	27
Paul Pritchett	Dealerman	28
Bob Loewe	Domestic Studies	28
Alice Pecararo	The Family	28

(continued)

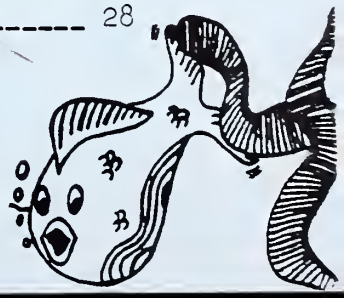


TABLE OF CONTENTS, continued

Maria Mellinger	I Lost My Father When I fell In Love	29
Nels Nelson	Poppa/A Reply	29
Bob Loewe	Pops	30
Nels Nelson	Toilet Training	30
Michael Faxio	Beautiful Waters Run Free	30
Betty Burns Zacate	Cacti A La Ice	31
Maria Mellinger	In A Dirty Coffee Shop	31
Maria Mellinger	"And That's Why I Don't Eat Gravy	31
Paul Pritchett	Toast	31
Alice Pecararo	Inventions	33
Amy Jo	Writer's Black	33
Elise Wylie Boucher	I Ran Blindly	33
Nels Nelson	And So It Goes	33

**NOTE: Several additional pieces were accepted for this issue, but WORDEATER 67 has here run out of space. Poems by Bob Loewe, Maria Mellinger, Nels Nelson, and David Sklowdowski, and prose by Jerald Janes, Bob Loewe, and Maria Mellinger are being held over for WORDEATER 68. Look for them.

wordeater 67

Alice Pecararo

THE VISIT

You cannot know, my friends, how much I
envy you for things you may not be aware.
The loving look within your eyes,
for secret things you share.
I seek your company at times,
so that my soul may view,
from far outside the space you've made
for no one else but you.
That lovely place, your private space,
without the need for friends,
and I notice, secretly, from deep inside
the tender passion each of you extends.

I wonder if you've ever seen behind
my casual dropping in,
the need to be with those who share
the place I've never been.
There are times I cannot be with you,
for I fear that you may see,
the lonely place within my soul,
a place for me, and never we.
Yet, when I hunger just to warm my heart
with love that other people share,
then, I'll come by and smile,
and watch, and wish that I were there.

****

Maria Mellinger

THE RESURRECTION OF THE ONE-PAGE ESSAY

Oh, come on. You didn't really think I was going to stay dead, did you? My idiotic author, who has lots of space in his brain due to all the missing cells up there, brought me back to life by purchasing a new notebook and rewriting all the thoughts I thought were mine.

I must admit that the rebirth wasn't all that bad. He opened the notebook to its clean, pure middle, and I spewed forth from his brain by way of his pen,

(continued)

muddying it forever. Boy howdy, was that fun! Then he closed up the book and I was surrounded by beautiful blank pages. The privacy was perfect and silent, and I absorbed it, knowing that soon the hippie would take it away from me.

I had time to reflect on my life. What had I done wrong? Awww...Nothin! What had I done right? Ha! Everything else! How was Uncle Carl, the lawn mower instruction pamphlet? Probably on drugs.

Oh, I kill myself sometimes!

I grow bored in less than a minute, so I flipped myself open and took a look around. I was on the living room floor, and I could see the ashes of my former self ground into the sick chocolate brown weave. Perhaps this was how a snake feels, looking at his old skin, or how the hippie reacts when he sees clumps of long hair resting in the sink. Whatever it was, it felt strange.

I turned away from it and looked over at a book entitled Elementary Algebra. Numbers pretending to be words; they turned my stomach. A whole book full of figures, laughing and grinning as if they had a story to tell. They were meaningless. They lived long, meaningless lives as ink blots. No, stains. Meaningless ink stains.

Then I turned and looked at myself. "I have lived a long and meaningless life." The words echoed in my head.

The ashes on the floor grabbed my attention again. How easy it had been to reduce my single page to nothingness. How easy it could be again, if a match got too close or a French recipe exploded in the oven.

My author came in, and I looked up at him. Let someone else be the privileged ink stain for awhile. Let someone else be the mathematical cynic. I just wanted to be written.

I grabbed for his ankle and made a nasty paper cut there. He picked me up, rubbed his wound, and sat down at the old-fashioned royal typewriter. No word processors here, no sir.

And as he tapped at the keys, I felt myself dying. Not the hot burning death I experienced before, but a gentle floating sensation as I was lifted and transported to a story or a poem or whatever it was he tapped out.

From the ceiling, I could see him holding the shell that had once been my body, and was now merely a notebook. I could see myself being read by others, shared with others, and living on in their minds. Maybe some of these readers would take a fragment of me and build a second poem or story.

And I knew I was no longer a piece of the writer's notebook. I was a living, breathing piece of reality.

THE END!
(ta-da!)

****

Alice Pecararo

THE QUIET MAN

He was getting old.
Not the feeble, sickly old
with loose jaws, and rheumy eyes
staring blandly into a past no one
cared about.
His long, angular frame was bent,
and the hair was certainly all white
by now, but his eyes--those eyes that
were,
and always had been clear,
humorous and sharply focused, were
still illuminated with wisdom
and secrets he never revealed
to anyone I know of.
He had big hands, or so they seemed
to me. Big strong hands that
even tho he hadn't worked for years,
still showed traces of grime from
machines he spent his lifetime
wiring with electrical strings
and gizmos and things.
All, or most of his life
be nurtured and fed wires into the belly
of those monstrous hulks of metal that
would
one day grind coal from under the earth
somewhere far away.
One of the things people always said
about him was that he was a
quiet man...
People always said, "Nick doesn't talk
much, unless he has something important

(continued)

The Quiet Man, continued

to say,"
That was true, because I remember when
I was a small girl, I respected
that opinion of him, and tried very hard
not to bother him with idle conversation.
When he would come home from work,
I'd sit on the front porch
until I saw him walk into view from
the streetcar stop which was around
the corner from our house--I knew
it would be 30 minutes or so before
supper was on the table
and I would have that time to
think of important things to talk about.
He always answered patiently, with
much thought in every reply, and
I knew I was one of the few
people capable of the lofty, insightful
questions he felt worthy of
discussion.
Every Sunday, except in winter, or
when it rained and the playing
field would be too muddy, the two
of us would walk to the park...about a mile
and 1/2 as I remember it.
It was a ritual--never altered, never
deviated from. We would watch the men
play baseball and when the game
was over, we would stop at the
park field house where our voices would
echo in the huge building, and I was
given 2 pennies to feed into
the peanut machine.
There was little conversation during
these weekly treks, an occasional
comment about the ballgame, or
what we might expect for dinner that
day (it was usually pot roast, a Sunday
probability) but I was quite satisfied
with that arrangement, because I knew
that if something important occurred to
him, he
would surely share it with me.
I don't remember how old I was
when the Sunday afternoon walks ended.
I was growing up and had other
things to do and other people
to do them with.
He stopped going to the park about
that time too--that part of our lives
was over.
Not too long ago, someone commented that
"Nick was quieter than ever"...He seemed
to have fewer and fewer important things
to say. He was often seen
sitting alone, staring out the window
at nothing in particular. The eyes had
changed too, and become distant, as if
they knew something he did not
choose to share with another human
being.
He died quietly and quickly, dropping
to the floor one day after lunch.
I miss him.
I can't often think of him without
remembering the enticing smell
of peanuts in that ancient marble and
granite field house, and his big gentle
hands, holding mine as we silently walked
home from another Sunday afternoon
in the park.

****

Amy Jo

CANNIBAL MAN

I had a dream about you.
You fathered my child
and then chased me thru
the mall with a twisted
coat-hanger, screaming,
JUST FOR THE TASTE OF IT!
You ripped my heart out
with your teeth and stomped
up and down on it, screaming,
GUFFAW! GUFFAW!
You cut off my hand to hide
the ring, and hobbled my
legs with an axe so I couldn't
run away, screaming,
YOU WANT LOVE? GET CLOSER!
You raped my soul and
then ate it for dinner.

****

Nels Nelson

DRUNK

My friends and I
mixed our lives together one night,
Shaking our memories into a very smart
Martini,
Our combined souls being the olive.
A stranger came
and drank from us until he was intoxicated.
He went to his car, and vomited
On the side of it.
The next morning, we were all washed
Into a drainage sewer by a
Garden hose.

****

Elise Wylie Boucher

SHADOW DANCER

I stand here, alone.
My shadow cast long by the car lights behind me
Amber, orange leaves scuttle across the blacktop before me
I am immobile
I listen to the screaming silence of the night and shiver
It is damp.
I wait
My empty eyes scan the empty scene
I am in the middle of the street--undisturbed
The wetness of the air envelopes me, drowns me
As I, in my despair, add Fool to my life's
Repertoire of roles
Oh, grief
I know the dawn will never come.

****

Maria Mellinger

JIGSAW PUZZLE LANGUAGE

Jigsaw puzzle language
Put together a bedtime story
Cardboard lullaby
Paper pillow
And always
A piece of the blanket
Missing.

****

Erika Nelson

ATTRACTION

The magnetic pull
Between
Hot and
Cold
Pulls them
Closer,
Tugging,
At the core
Of their being.

Notes floating
Past
Are caught.
They
Twirl and
Swirl,
Dancing
To this mysterious
Melody
Few have heard.

They rocket
Into space
Zooming along
Weightless,
Faster and
Faster
Until the stars
Blur.

Twirling,
Closer and
Closer.
Touching
As they melt
Into one.

A spark
Grows into
A flame.
The fire
Blazes
Higher,
Until it explodes
In a burst
Of color.

Enclosed in a
shower of

(continued)

Attraction, continued

Reflections,
They smell the
Sweet scent
Of honeysuckle
As they begin
Their descent.

****

Alice Pecararo

HI--!

I couldn't help but notice,
the open look of interest in your face.
I might respond--
All it would take is a smile, a nod,
to give you some momentum for the chase.
I'll turn away instead,
and leave you feeling I've rejected you--
when, truth be known,
I've just repaired a patch of weakened fortress
with a little bit of glue.

****

Nels Nelson

STRIKE IT UP

Depression hung in her head
Like heavy, winter cold mucous
Just four years ago
She danced to the melody of a new marriage.
When they had their daughter, Nicole,
The sweet volume of bliss increased,
Enveloping all who entered thier world.
Then, two Augusts ago,
On an extremely unnoticeable day,
Husband and daughter, out on an errand,
Wrapped their car around an uncaring tree.
The song abruptly ended,
And she couldn't cope with the silence.
My dear sister, longing to dance again,
Bought a ticket on a bottle of pills.
I hope, Susan, that the band is playing again.

****

David Sullivan

PULLDRAW

Hot slag falls
Societies scream
Admiral Avant-Garde
Kills General Surrealism

Families quiver
On a melting Earth
Gasses build up
The tiny planet explodes

Valium-filled addict
Rapes phoenix in supermarket
Can't trust a damn soul
Everybody kills

Mister Rogers cries
Bozo blows up Cookie
Ray Raynor grows psychotic
Captain Kangaroo serves life sentence

Jim Morrison jams away
All B. Sure raps a beat
Gloria Estefan sings in Latin
Music's full of shit

Lost purpose in life
Mike Dukakis calls a draw
The bombs go off
Animal flesh ruptures

A glowing mushroom cloud
Calls forever destruction

****

Nels Nelson

EYES WHICH
(ARE THEY THE WINDOWS TO THE SOUL?)

A china-plate girl stares at me daily
From across the room with reptile eyes
Which glisten like beads of water in a crystal bowl.
Taken out of context, the eyes are wide open
To devour injured prey which is bleeding confusion.
But when placed in her paper face,

(continued)

Eyes Which, continued

They are the eyes of a newborn porcelain
swan
That doesn't know how to fly,
And is afraid that I will pull her from the
nest
Before her mother returns.

****

Judy Belfield

FIRELIGHT EYES

speak softly
carry sticks
jump over candles
know Coleridge winters
feel passion in purple
deep enough to drown
dance Stravinsky
play cellos and Pan pipes
all the day
all the night.

Firelight eyes
sing gypsy blues
at full-moon time
wash out with the tide
from here to eternity
finger forbidden folds
sparkle like Tinkerbell's feet
after eating canaries
while the cat's away
all the night
all the day

****

Maria Mellinger

CHECKED INTO A HOTEL

Checked into a hotel
So she wouldn't have to make her own bed,
Tied her arm
Pumped a poison
To get the anger out of her head.
Newspaper clippings lined all the walls;
An album scratched itself into the night.
She tossed
She turned
And closed her eyes to escape her sight;
Because a tiny crack in the edge of the mirror
Could slice her neck from ear to ear.
So a cliché neon flashed in infinity
And an uneasy sleep invited her to dance.
She dreamed,
It seemed,
As the night's lance
Pierced her body.

****

Nels Nelson

CAUTION

Staring at me with insect eyes
Ready to attack and flee at the same time
Through whisper curtains
Poised on the arm of existence.
If she bites, the fly swatter
Is nearby.

****

Nels Nelson

DON'T TOUCH

Paintings, sculptures, and other
Forms of art like those
Are viewed with white gloved eyes
So as not to soil the work.
The artists' hands are dirty
Like those of a garbage man.

****

Maria Mellinger

FAST STUDY

Fast study
By candlelight
He learns all he needs to know
Hiding places
Secrets
Touches wrapped in shadow
And delivered in darkness
Inevitably,
Wicks curl in on themselves
And a pool of wax
Is left behind

****

****

John Schmitz

THE UPRISING

Before my mind permits the morning rise,
My feet take charge, yet not instructed so.
They pull me from my bed, but I am wise
To such a jealous act. Such strength below!
My mind dares not defend its throne of pow'r
And forfeits its one treasure, that of thought,
Though knowing feet possess but flesh. An hour
Escapes, but look! It seems the feet have taught
All parts, from nose to knee, to think they think.
Defiance rules, not one a slave to mind
Or feet. Please wake the mind, the missing link
To all this utter chaos they've designed.
But mind expires with one last cry, and I
Must walk without a thought until I die.

****

Judy Belfield

ROMANCE EXISTENTIAL

We dream of
each other on
coldstar nights
Camus-like
solitary one-celled
isolation
cut off from
connected to
the rest of
everything
I dream of you
dreaming of me
our night voices
husky,
parrying with each other.
I dream real things
not half as pleasant
as wake-up dreams.

****

Erika Nelson

SPERM & SMOKE

Where, she thought, did smoke go?
Or the millions and billions of sperm
That had been flung between her thighs?
The beads of water condensing on her
Glass, suspended as if in mid-air, would
Be gone by morning.
Science had led her to believe
That the water was only assuming
A different form.
If that assumption was to be trusted,
Then was it not conceivable that
Somewhere there was lurking
One hell of a lot of sperm and smoke?

****

Kim Vollmer

GOD, PLEASE DON'T MELT

winter frost frozen covers all, and everything sparkles and shines in the
sunlight--like your eyes--
god, please don't melt
grey reality will ring
and your eyes, out of the sunlight,
who knows what will happen to them.

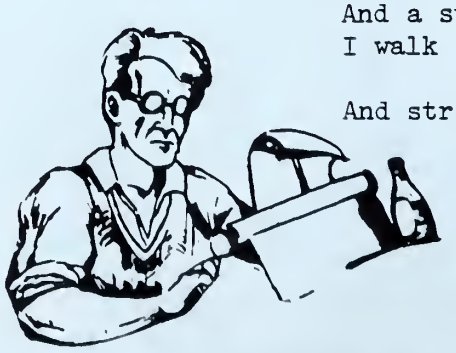
****

Maria Mellinger

WHAT A SPLENDID PLEASURE TO BE HATED

What a splendid pleasure to be hated--
It forces the blood to move through my veins,
And the pen to write my words belated.
Through my losses I view their petty gains,
Through my dark eyes, I see their looks returned
And a strength builds within, only to grow.
I walk in their world, use the secrets learned,
And strive to conquer what they do not know,

(continued)



To reinforce my power over them.
And so I write these words for them to see--
Though understanding presents a problem--
It's an honor to be hated by me.
Your ignorance and hate have made me wise--
These gifts you gave me will be your demise.

****

Liz Hand

TAKE SOME FOR YOURSELF

Daddy was gone, truly gone. The pain and suffering he had experienced over the last few months would be no more. I had come as soon as I got the phone call, surprising everyone including myself, by requesting that he not be moved until I got there. This was surprising because last February, when he had taken a turn for the worse, I told my family that I didn't wish to be in his room when he "breathed his last."

My mother was one of the youngest of eight children. I was next to the youngest of six, having been born when my mother was in her thirties. Therefore, most of the relatives on Mother's side were well advanced in age. As a result, my Mother and I attended many funerals during my childhood. At each one, we followed a strict ritual, which included viewing the deceased in his or her casket before extending our sympathies to the bereaved family. I always hated that part. It was not until, at the age of twelve, that I finally balked. Uncle Freddie, my favorite uncle, died of cancer that year. I adamantly refused to go forward and peer into his casket. I wanted to remember him as he had been, full of life and laughter, not cold and lifeless in a padded box.

However, when my mother called, I wanted desperately to see with my own eyes, that he really was dead, not in a deep sleep.

I passed Roger, the funeral director, and several members of the volunteer fire department in the living room on my way to Father's bedroom. They had waited patiently for my husband to drive me the thirty miles from our house to his. Roger had been a classmate of mine all through elementary and secondary school. His father had been our town's undertaker, and after his death, Roger took over the family business. In this capacity, he had overseen the laying to rest of many of his classmates' parents. Now it was my turn, it was comforting to have him there.

My mother and sister-in-law sat sadly with red-rimmed eyes on two kitchen chairs someone had placed in the doorway of an adjacent bedroom.

What remained of my father's sadly emaciated body lay in the hospital bed that had dominated the corner of his room since he had contracted pneumonia in January. He was lying on his back, his gnarled hands crossed, just as Denise had left him when she'd finished bathing him just one hour before he died.

He didn't look as if he was sleeping, the way people so often describe it. He looked dead, but at peace. The pain was gone from his weathered face and his hands were no longer clenched in anguish and frustration.

I was glad for him that the struggl with illness was over, and relieved for myself that the arduous duties associated with caring for an invalid had ceased. The form contained in his bed looked more like an Ethiopian famine victim than the strong, charismatic father I had loved and admired. Those skinny, sunken shoulders didn't seem to belong on my father. My mind was brimming over with memories as I gazed on him.

Dad had walked on crutches since childhood polio had left one leg badly damaged. Before I was born, he underwent surgery to repair the damage. This resulted in one leg being shorter than the other. He could not stand without aid. But despite this he was a very active man. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and camping. Years of supporting his weight with crutches developed his shoulders and arm muscles. For this reason, he had a great deal of upper-body strength and could actually move faster than you would expect. He would support himself on the crutches while swinging his body like a pendulum, then transfer his weight to his good foot while bringing his crutches forward for the next step. When I was very small, I sometimes couldn't keep up with him,

(continued)

and I'd cry, "Daddy, please wait up," then he would slow down.

I remembered all the camping trips we had gone on, rowing for hours, while he fished the back-waters at the club. One trip in particular sprang to mind as tears sprang to my eyes. I was about seven. My brother, Dad, and I were on a huge lake in Wisconsin, fishing. Suddenly, a fierce storm blew up out of nowhere. One minute there was blue sky, the next angry, grey storm clouds. My brother and I were terrified as the high winds whipped the water into waves higher than the side of our small fishing boat. Dad ordered us to lie down in the bottom of the boat. He took the tarp, normally used to cover the boat when beached, from under his seat and covered us. He said it was to keep the rain out, but I suspect the real purpose was so we wouldn't see the lightning.

He must have looked very like Hemingway's vision of the "Old Man," as he pointed the prow into the wind, and revving up the old outboard, steered us safely to the shore. The trip to shore couldn't have taken more than twenty minutes, even with the fierce winds, but it felt like hours to my brother and me as we shivered under the soggy tarp.

When we did at last gain the shore, my mother who, not being a fisherman, stayed at camp, welcomed us with relieved hugs. She had us all sit in the car to wait out the storm. She feared lightning might strike the tent or one of the trees nearby.

Once safe and dry in the family car, my fear lessened enough for me to venture a look outside. The storm showed no signs of weakening, and I watched the storm with that giddy sense of excitement one can only experience when you feel safe and frightened at the same time, like when watching a scary movie in a dark theater. That's when I noticed my doll sitting on the picnic table where I'd left her to go fishing. "My dolly!" I cried. "She's getting all wet, she's out in this storm."

"Shhh," my mother scolded. "She's just a doll, a little rain won't hurt her." I slumped back in my seat and cried. I didn't want to watch the storm anymore, I was too worried about my dolly.

A few minutes later, the awning on the tent began to flap wildly and my Dad got out to secure it. When he returned to the car, I noticed a bulge under his slicker, my doll. He had even rummaged in the tent until he'd found some dry clothes for me to put on her.

I was so happy. "I love you, Daddy," I told him, hugging his strong neck.

"You're my favorite daughter, your age," he replied.

That was the way Dad always replied to outpourings of affection from any of his six children. He would, of course, change the gender for my brothers. I don't ever remember him saying the words, "I love you," but I always knew he did.

As I grew into adulthood, and had children of my own, the "favorite child your age" line was reserved strictly for the grandchildren. But he didn't stop letting us know he cared. Whenever I or one of my siblings would say, "I love you, Dad," he would reply, "Take some for yourself."

These, and many other memories, filled my heart as I gently brushed the hair from his careworn forehead. I knew I would miss him terribly, but I was proud he had been my father, and grateful that he had always let me know that I was loved.

"Take some for yourself, Dad," I whispered as I kissed my Father good-bye for the last time.

****

Nels Nelson

DOWN, PLEASE

Standing alone on
A mountain of nothing
To lose,
I prepare my body
To be chafed
Raw by experience,
And begin my descent
Into the tearing brambles
Of Life.

****

Nels Nelson

GROOVING

Walking through a freshly mowed,
Summer night lawn, cool-like-the-
Underside-of-a-pillow blades
Lick my feet.
I can almost hear the crackle-fizzle
Of a light bulb about to burn out
As fireflies slam-dance across the sky.
A paint-smock spotted cat rips into
The garbage bags on the side of the garage
And Mom calls me in for supper, ruining
it all.

****

Elise Wylie Boucher

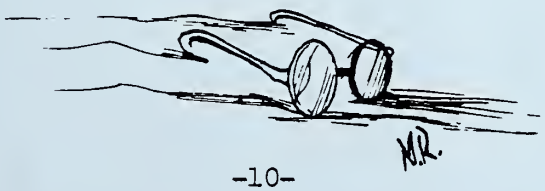
TO YOUR BACK

Why then did you save me
If you meant only to cast me away
Would that you had left me
Searching and sorting and sewing
Gathering a thin garment of strength
To re-cover my scars
And walk on.

Why did you offer your hand
Kiss my tears away
And balm my wounds
When you meant only to discard me?

Now I stand uncertain
Still stunned by the blow
Watching you, watching her
Naked again to pain
Glass tears drop from my face
To the ground, and shatter
More broken bits
I must gather
Cut my fingers, bleed
More scars of despair

****



Tim Pote

TOGETHER

The dazzling, bright, white light of day,
The radiant beauty of the moon in the black
night,
The better part of their existence is spent
At opposite ends of the world from one
another.
But in that instant each day,
When they meet, entwine, momentarily mingle
with each other,
The image they form is more exquisite than
any
That either could ever hope to form alone.

Therefore, with each sunset that you gaze
upon,
Think of the day when we will be caught
up in each other's
arms.
That we too may form such an image:
The coming together of two beings so
different,
And yet, so right together--like the colors
of the sunset on the
evening sky.

****

Judy Belfield

GREEK TO ME

Against the back wall
illusions dance
without plan or pattern,
exercise themselves
to the beat of silent sambas,
keep the tango tempos
of unshared dreams.
We watch,
prisoners of our eyes,
and imagine the melody
never having been to
South America.
My skin knows the music
deep in itself
feels the reason ooze up
like sweat through pores
to the surface
to cool the hot shackles
of sight, of hearing, of touch

(continued)

Greek To Me, continued

and taste,
to soothe the abrasions
in the darkness.
Our time is less than limited
but has no measure--
perhaps we can survive
this way
indefinitely.

****

David Sullivan

RAPED FREEDOM

Korean Child
Living in the jungles
Of the media-possessed

Almight Uncle Sam
Has raped your land
Claiming it for his own
Rules it God-like
With native figureheads
Ultimate corruption commands

Promised everything
Given nothing
College students rage
In want of America's due paid

Fight on
Korean Child
Fight on
Strip the continent of the Cheshire Cat
Who has raped you
One full score and a decade

Far Too Long

****

Paul Pritchett

COMIC BOOK LOVE

I love you like a comic book.
The greatest way to love.
A love that is never actualized,
as you fly above.
A love of guessing your secret identity.
Just like Lois Lane
You have to fly. You have to fly.
Even when I'm in pain.
I'll share you with the world.
It's better than,
continued next issue.

****

Brian Carlson

I'M SICK OF...

I'm sick of....
Two hearts beating as one
Your eyes say it all
Rhythm of night, Touch the night, etc.
Open Arms
The obscureness and relatability
of the word love
to the individual
State Cops
Feel the Heat
Into the Fire
Pawking meetaws
The feeling of heaven
attached to the lustful
connotation of love.....

****

Paul Pritchett

STRINGS
(A ONE-ACT PLAY)

Two men and three women are tied together with kite string. The strings connect ankles in a crisscross pattern. The characters are unable to break the strings. All characters are in their twenties.

First Man: I deny the strings.
First Woman: How can you deny the strings?
Second Man: It's easy. They are not - there.
Second Woman: You men always deny the strings.
Third Woman: (Pulling her string) Look! They are physically here.
First Man: Mass hypnosis.
Second Man: Mass confusion.
First Man: Mass mass.
Second Woman: Mass mass?
First Man: We think the strings are there because the state of Massachusetts wants them to be there.
Third Woman: That is the most asinine statement I've ever heard. The strings exist both physically and emotionally.

(continued)

Strings, continued

Second Woman: Emotion is everything.
Second Man: What do you know about emotion?
Second Woman: Remember last night, tell me, I dare you, who knows nothing about emotion?
Second Man: I deny the strings.
Second Woman: How can you say that? Look! (Pulling strings) they are real.
Second Man: The strings aren't real.
First Man: Strings are never real.
First Woman: Do either of you deny that rope exists?
First Man
Second Man: (In Unison) No.
Third Woman: (Yelling) How can you deny strings? Strings are stronger than rope. Rope means nothing. Strings mean everything.
First Man: I deny them.
Second Man: I deny them too.
Third Woman: If strings don't exist, I don't want to live. (Takes a ring from her pocket, swallows it, and chokes to death.)
First Man
Second Man: (In Unison) I told you the strings didn't exist.
First Woman
Second Woman: (In Unison) You're right.

****

Bob Loewe

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

Let us all be morbid!
Write depressing poems!
Make them lyric and depress
For no one ever needs to smile.
Make them stupor for a while.
Don't let them laugh for soul's defenses
But beat them down to poetic repentence.
Crush their smiles line by line
Making vinegar out of wine.

****

David Sklowdowski

NEAR FANTASY

Such joy we feel as we lay
on the perforated edge of fantasy.
If this line should break
free, we escape bewildering
reality and enter the world
where the grass is greener
on all sides.

****

Judy Belfield

DECEPTION

Night stars ice-blue
in distance I cannot measure
Sunsleep slipping
under paper mantle
matte-finish velvet,
you sing my fingertips
like obsidian beads,
black clicks the language
of whisperkisses.
I say you summer's breath
with January lips--
a rogue's unfair muzzle
harried under lamb's wool.
My tooth is sharp as a crescent moon,
my desire a deadly disease.

****

Erika Nelson

MY LOVE IS LIKE THAT RED, RED ROSE

My love is like that red, red rose,
Stripped, petal by petal
To that dark place where nectar flows
And bees won't go.

****

Wayne Ceranek

DELUSIONS

THE LIGHT HURTS MY EYES
EVER SINCE I MET THE MAN
(He was so elegant)
I WANT TO SLEEP DURING THE DAY
(And kind too)
IN AN ENCLOSED SPACE...LIKE A BOX
(I think he was royalty)
AND I'VE WANTED ALL MY MEAT TOTALLY RAW
(A count or something)
OR MAYBE IT'S MY IMAGINATION

****

Alice Pecararo

RETREAT

It's over...
The judge decreed it so.
He smiled and said "Good Luck" as if
beyond the courtroom doors, I'd start another
chapter in my life
and never take a second look behind--
I can't , not yet, your Honor,
cause first I've got to find
just what is left of me.
So, like a child, I'll count out all
the marbles---sort out all the colors
and put away the best,
the purees, cats' eyes, all the precious stones
that I lent out to someone once.
I'll put them all away and play
a while with those I can afford to lose---
Metaphors? I guess--
I was always into metaphors
while illusion was your game.

****

Maria Mellinger

THERE IS A TIME

There is a time when all must go
And face the heat of a melting snow.
Wipe the sweat upon your sleeve
Until the passion takes its leave.
Then touch the skin that's left behind
And feel the core of the fragile mind;
Taste the skin,
Breathe it in--
In wintertime.

There is a time when the feeling shears,
The cheek is a map of frozen tears;
And still the wind cries, wanting more,
As it blows winter whispers across the floor.
No, this is not love,
Not this cruel and human shove
Not the frostbitten spin
The snow lets in--
In wintertime.

****

Maria Mellinger

ALONE

One word
One thought
No stanza

Alone.

No rhyme
Missing meter
Missing you

Alone.

****

Maria Mellinger

SPREAD YOUR TEARS

Spread your tears on my
Cotton sheets
And rest your dreams
On my pillow
While dust on the
Record needle
Chases our favorite verse.
Leave your memories
On the floor
With the bed slippers
And let me wrap you
In dreams
And Beatle symphonies.

****

Maria Mellinger

I WAS WALKING THROUGH THE TIME

I was walking through the time
We were together in my mind;
I was thinking what to say--
I didn't mean to awake.
I felt the pillow touch my hair
And I dreamed that you were there;
I turned to whisper words to you
But in my mind you had moved.
Then I removed myself from sleep
And plunged into reality so deep;
I'll be back again tonight--
Dream your turn and don't be frightened.

****

Maria Mellinger

THE ONLY TIME

The only time my grandfather
Holds my grandmother's hand
Is when he's in the hospital.
He's sick every six months or so,
And perhaps he fears
That as his heart dies,
So does his love
And he must confess
To her
That he is still in love.
She visits him daily,
Holding his hand,
Until he is released,
And my father drives him home
While she sits alone in the back seat.

****

Maria Mellinger

DEAD MINUTES

Dead minutes hovered above the clock,
Waiting to be buried,
But the hands were busy ticking,
And the corpses fell to the floor
With a clunk
Unheard
Because of the cuckoo's
Stupid sound.

****

Betty Burns Zacate

AUTUMN III

Leaves upon the lawn
colorful regatta sails
upon a green sea

Old cast off snake skin
translucent between the reeds
ghost of gold and green

Giant rusty moon
fruit of a dusty harvest
giant blushing peach

Tiny ghosts floating
across the cemetery
drifting milkweed seeds

The last dozen leaves
flutter on maple perches
twelve sparrows preening

****

Michael Fazio

THE MINDS OF THE PAST

The minds of the past
Are present in the world today.
Not reincarnated,
Just molded to the thoughts
Of this point in time

****

Brian Carlson

THE NEW TESTAMENT TO DECLINING DAY

1. When a thought hits the brain...

2. Light bulb celebrations
   The new flowers
   blossoming
   on electric wires

3. New testament to declining day

4. in bare town squares
   meeting places and centers

5. Men of Letters
   shrinking to shadows

6. and what are these
   flowers

7. Broken for, memories
   they fall
   to shed light on

8. Nothing but
   Electric tears
   of glass

9. Bouquets of light
   to banquets of night

****

Maria Mellinger

DISTANCE DIES

Distance dies
Dreams await
Join me now
Softly
Sleep and you will be with me
Softly

Wake at once
Wipe your eyes
Do as you will
Softly
Until we meet again in dreams
Softly

****

Brian Carlson

ANYTHING LONG DISTANCE

Long drives and exit ramps
Long talks to a mute angel
Firecrackers
Promise-Recall
a momentary explosion
It's true
when they say
what you need
is in your own back yard

Laughingly absorbing a smile
like a touch on a wet window
I reminisce with night
and cast off the day

****

Jerald Janes

EAST OF ELGIN

It began when my friend, Renee, and I were watching a house for a friend. The house was way back in the swamps. Renee and I were just sitting about, in our friend's house, talking to each other.

The next door neighbor was being nosy. She kept looking over at us. "Jerry," Renee said, "That lady keeps looking at us."

"Yes, she is," I replied.

We kept on talking. Then, the next door lady came out of her door and stood on her porch staring away at us.

"Jerry, maybe she thinks that we're burglars."

"That might be, Renee," I responded.

After this, the woman walked angrily through the muddy yard and stood directly outside of our window, staring as hard as she could stare at us.

"Jerry, that lady is standing right outside our window now."

"Renee, she could be looking for a lost set of keys, or perhaps those sunglasses that everyone seems to lose, but never gives up searching, hmmm?" I said.

We kept talking. The woman continued to stare.

"Jerry?" Renee said, "could you do something about her. She makes me a little uncomfortable standing out there and all, don't you agree?"

"Okay, let me think for a moment." I thought for close to a moment, give or take an instant. "I know," I said.

I turned into a space monster, and roared at this lady through the window between us, shattering it in the process. She was very startled and ran back into her house.

Renee got a little more relaxed after that. "Thanks, Jer, you're a special friend."

"I know," I replied.

I heard a door slam and turned to see a man with dark hair parted on the side running from her house. The pale complexioned woman peered out of their window at us, tears in her eyes.

"HEY YOU BASTARD! WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO TO MY WIFE?" the man asked in a very big voice through the empty window pane.

I said, "Oh, hi. I'm really sorry. Did she get a cut from the window?"

"WINDOW? YOU'RE AN ALIEN OR SOMETHING! I SAW THAT TOO!" At that he mumbled something about automatic weapons and ran back into his house.

"Jerry, that guy is upset. You better help him," Renee suggested.

"You know, Renee, you're right," I said.

(continued)

I made a quick phone call, and within a few seconds, a whole bunch of people were surrounding the neighbor's house. One of these people turned to me and smiled. With that they broke the door down and piled inside the living room. Renee and I stared as hard as we could stare through the window and could see the two neighbors being beaten severely by the crowd I summoned.

When it was over, the neighbors were dead, their home was destroyed, and our window had been repaired.

The crowd left, the swamp reclaimed its territory over the neighbors' lot, and Renee and I continued to talk.

Our friend came back home.

"Thanks, Jerry and Renee, the house looks great just as I left it. Can I offer you a pork tenderloin?"

I answered, "No, Renee and I don't eat red meat, but thank you anyway!"

Renee and I were getting in our car when our friend opened his window and called out to us.

"Hey friends, what happened to the Bianca's house?"

Renee and I looked at each other, then Renee replied for me. "I killed the little piggies."

Our friend laughed, then waved goodbye. We got into our car and drove away, a Beatles tape playing on the car stereo.

****

Brian Carlson

SARATOGA

Trash and Cats
Blind dogs running
I don't like you
Saratoga

People meet
like the flattened petals, black & green
sidewalk thrown
Return to Saratoga

Limbs and headstones
Faces and states
I have forgotten
while staying in Saratoga

****

Elise Wylie Boucher

IN PRINCE PARK

Collar turned against the wind
Hair violently flays my face
Fall's colors tumble across streets
Brick, red, brown

I am alone,
(Home fronts hide their battles
I fight mine for all to see--
But no one looks)
Houses are blank
Brick streets are empty
Sky is clouded--like my eyes
I stand stiffly
The tall trees shed their leaves I shed
my tears
I suffer my agony alone
Living in a new limbo

PRINCE PARK #2

White shirt reflecting summer sun
Bare feet squelshing in the mud
The rain is over now
Leaving puddles like lakes
Miniature heaven at five

A willow weeps above me
Finger leaves touch me
(cool, damp, smelling of the earth)

I grasp the branches, swing, slip off

Land (THUD) winded, eyes to the sky
and laughing

Everything is joy at five

****

John Schmitz

NO ROOM AT THE ZOO

On the arctic edge of an arctic edge
A solitary human hand caresses a damp dwarfdune
Settled by tiny beached bathospheres struggling to burrow
The other casually claws action-wear, presently worn
But ceases its search upon the emergence of
Two peering pupils of a peeping joggerman
Smiles and miles of mesh impressions
Of a bottle bearing no tidings
Merely fascinating footprints

****

Maria Mellinger

IN THE CORNER

In the corner
Of my bedroom
Is a spider
In a web.
In the darkness
Of my nightmares
He spins around
In my head.
When I wake up
He's on the floor
And I realize
He's nothing more
But a spider
In the corner
In the darkness
Near my bed,
And he'll never
crawl to get me
In the safety
Of my own web.

****

Nels Nelson

ABANDONED IN THE JUNGLE

Scarlet words of forever
Crept tiptoe from her mouth.
She took my hand and pulled me
Into a world where emotions
Are free, roaming beasts.
Winds covered our footprints
So that no one could follow us
Into the secret jungle of each other.
We came upon another man,
Who danced into her eyes,
And scarlet words of forever
Crept tiptoe from her mouth

****

Elise Wylie Boucher

THE VOLE CURATOR

I want to slap your face
With my agony
Wound you with my despair
But you are laughing and untouchable
You care little for cripples like me
You play with pretty words and hearts
Caring little for the crystalline tears
They are trophies
Collected, displayed, discussed
I cannot touch you
Indeed, no one ever can.

****

Maria Mellinger

THE BAG LADY

The bag lady down the street
Found ballet shoes in a garbage heap
And the children on the corner
Were looking.

She walked down a little way
Put a nickel in a blind man's tray
And the women in the shops
Were looking.

She fed the birds the food she could find
It was hers, but she didn't mind
And the men with their business suits
Were looking.

When night put an end to day
Down on the concrete she lay
And everyone everywhere
looked away.

****

David Sullivan

JACKIE K. O.

I admire you,
Wife of Kennedy,
Wife of Onassis.
So much you've supported
With a Goddess's courage
And emerged with flying colors.
I salute you,
Jacqueline Bouvier.

****

Brian Carlson

FOR KEROUAC

Oct. 21, 1969

Writing in jazz
and dying on Dizzy G.'s
birthday,

It was an ironic gift
this was the highest compliment
he could pay

to an art form alternately
filling him with life
and taking him from it.

****

David Sullivan

PHILOSOPHY 301

My present philosophy of life consists of a vapid pit containing an endless spinning vacuum leading into the midst of mental insanity.

First, I turned to Christianity, hoping to find an escape from the drudgery of everyday life, but then I found out that you have to give up virtually everything you had ever loved in life (drinking, doing drugs, and having tons of promiscuous sex) and become some warped-out version of Pope John or Martin Luther chanting "I love God, I love God, I love God" over and over again. I finally said the fuck with it and left it alone.

Next, I tried Buddhism, the religion that promoted self-awareness, or so its severe followers said. One afternoon, one of my closest friends, one of these fervent practitioners of Buddhism, gave me some religious material to read over and a small wax version of a Buddha.

When I got home later that afternoon and looked at the material, I got frustrated trying to figure out what the hell the material was trying to say in Hindu phonetics and threw the reading material and the wax Buddha into the fireplace downstairs. When my friend asked me where had I placed the reading material he had given me, I told him that the widow neighbor's dog had a dental fit over it. The kid bought the story, and that ended that attempt.

Third, I went towards Satanic Witchcraft, the art of the occult. I got in touch with another friend who was an expert in this field, and he invited me a sit-over at his house that Saturday night. When I went over to his place the weekend, I thought the joint looked pretty decent until my friend escorted me into his bedroom and introduced me to six of the weirdest people I have ever known in my entire life. What followed was something that I would probably never forget.

About an hour through the sit-in, my friend pulled out a ouija board and placed it in the center of the human circle we all formed. He instructed everyone to put their hands on the board (I rejected the offer, choosing to keep my hand crossed against my chest my friend patiently understood) as the funniest feeling came over my body when everyone started chanting and the board moved under them, not even being close to touched!

After a few seconds of deep meditating, one of the kids came to life like Vincent Price in a horror flick, and started speaking in strange voices. And one of the voices I recognized--my grandfather Charlie's! Old man Charlie, who'd been dead for over thirteen years! Frightened half out of my mind, I did not hesitate to use the only means of escaping this group of morons. I leapt through the closed window, struck the front lawn hard and hightailed it out like Batman and Robin in my '69 Camaro. Fuck that attempt.

(continued)

Finally, I turned to atheism, the religion of no religion. At campus one day, I read an administration-approved flyer that told of a seminar being held for non-believers of any religion in the little theater. Giving the message the flyer stated some thought, I decided to attend the seminar just for interest.

Now I am so sorry I ever even thought about going. The seminar wasn't much of shit in my notion, and all the students and the faculty who attended looked like religious dissidents from a colony on the planet Mars. The speakers were as equally drawn out and boring, talking about absolutely nothing except computer science and the decline of religion, the New Age and the decline of religion, fascist take-over and the decline of religion, the political system and the decline of religion, etcetera. Robust, asinine, stupid crap like that.

After that, I just said the hell with it all and decided to create my own religion which combined everything I encountered and that which I was happy with.

And every day now for the past seventeen years, I get up at five every morning and turn on the flame torch assembly which illuminates a melted conglomeration of a porcelain Buddha, Jesus Christ, and Madonna figurines. As the porcelain melts under the hot heat and rises my emotional "spirit," I activate five stereo turntables, each consisting of a 45 record of music giants Jim Morrison, Bob Marley, Jimi Hendrix, Jefferson Airplane, and John Lennon, and bang my head against a concrete slab until I manage to bloody and knock myself unconscious. An the same time I bang my head, I scream out every name I've hated on the face of the earth, from Spiro T. Agnew all the way down to Doctor Zhivago (over the years, I have added exceptions, most notably George H. W. Bush and J. Danforth Quale).

And do you want to know what the nice part is? I find it all a bunch of motherfucking FUN.

--Taken from His Grace (deposed) Michael Vadim
As translated by D. L. Sullivan, Jr.
Feature Columnist for the Daily Neville

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Alice Pecararo

SEEING

It's not nice and comfortable and satisfying
anymore, is it....
and I can't even tell you that I've noticed.
What subtle, almost imperceptible action
announced the death of our need
for each other?
We look at each other...
hoping not to see within each other's eyes
the reflection of our own indifference.
We touch....
without commitment, stoney bodies
locked in mutual deception.
Who said loneliness is better than being alone?
Not I....
Perhaps my dear it's time we had a talk.

****

Nels Nelson

IS IT TRUE?

I have heard said
That all men and women
Are becoming machines.
If that is so,
Is the machine operator named Bob,
Does he belong to a union,
And does he drink Old Style beer
While driving home from work
In his pick-up truck?

****

Brian Carlson

SOMETHINGS YOU CAN'T FIGURE OUT

Under the ultraviolet night
and the sweat of breathing lungs
her mouth was purple ice

God, seeing her
cash register smile
still makes me cringe

Presidents and postage stamps
Holy wars
Broken bones, bruised knees

Somethings
you just can't figure out
or forget

****

Nels Nelson

LIFE

The sea, belching onto the rocks,
Calls to me with intensity.
It looks vibrant, ominous,
But if I enter, it will tear me apart
Instead, perhaps wrongly so
I will stay in the snug, baby-blanket
warmth
Of my mind-world.
Nothing impressive has ever come
Of the dim candlelight of mediocrity,
But neither has unparalleled pain.

****

Maria Mellinger

I WILL KEEP YOUR SOUL CAGED

I will keep your soul caged and unfree
Like a tamed tiger locked in a zoo,
Until you admit that you love me.

I will keep you always, if need be,
Like a tired and worn out old shoe.
I will keep your soul caged and unfree.

I will keep you rusted, like a key,
Without a brass keyhole to peep through,
Until you admit that you love me

I will keep darkness until you see
The light countless others thought they knew.
I will keep you caged and unfree.

I will keep you fed on bread and tea
And plan what your cold future should do
Until you admit that you love me.

Imprisoned I am, never to flee,
Until I admit that I love you;
I will keep your soul caged and unfree,
Until you admit that you love me.

****

Michael Fazio

WHY DO YOU JUDGE ME

Why do you judge me
by my hair,
It's basically dead,
If you judge this way
You basically are too.

****

Maria Mellinger

NAME THE CAUSE

Name the cause and someone will fight for it
Whether to escape their own boring surround-
ings
Or live out their GI Joe rock 'n roll
fantasy.
Someone will cry for them,
When they return to the hick hometown,
Where everyone might have held their heads
high for the
hero,
But instead looked down
As an insignificant triangular bundle
Is presented to another mother.

****

Elise Wylie Boucher

THE SOULESS MAN

I see your reflection in the glass-
Is that all you are, a reflection?
I've never known you to feel
Although I have tried to touch you
So many times.

There are remnants of my childhood here
Pictures Toys Keys
No more a part of reality
Than you are

You stare silently at
Something I can't see-
You are the glass-transparent
You hold nothing you touch nothing
Just a window to what's beyond you.

****

Amy Jo

MOODS

the sky blushes crimson
frowns turbulent grey
chuckles pansy blue
sneers yellow haze
flirts pale pink
sleeps in the black.

****

Amy Jo

BOREDOM

the clock ticks
its hands move so
incredibly slow
(that fly on the screen
is driving me crazy)
radio's on
turn it up
can't hear it too well
this silence is so loud.

****

Nels Nelson

HOPE

From her
To you to
Me
Eggs are passed
Into the nest
Of my
Mind.

****

Nels Nelson

FORMALITY

A man with serious glasses
And somber
Sits in his work-a-daddy office.
Around his neck, a tie,
Properly strangling him
With sameness.

****

Nels Nelson

POINTLESS, BUT GREAT FOR A MOMENT

Sitting in a bar,
I kiss and tongue cigarette smoke
Between meeting with a gin and tonic glass.
Sweet Fat Daddy Carlisle calls me with his saxophone,
Calls me into it to flow from one note to the next.

Elise Wylie Boucher

DENIAL

I sit here in my own little world
Allowing reality to be obscured
The Sun shines on me-
  Blocked by an umbrella
  That hides the unprettiness around.

I can fool myself.
I can believe that, past the sunshade,
The World is Beautiful
And I
Am mistress of it all

Instead of a Pawn of my time.

****

Kim Vollmer

RESTLESS

I am a restless sleeper
you will not see
I am still when you kiss me
I am still
when you kiss me goodmorning
when you kiss me awake
when you kiss me good-bye
and I become restless
when I hear your car
purring
growling
purring
growling
purring
away from the curb
around the corner
and gone
awake I am restless
my mind tossed
like the blankets.

****

I pitch and sway and bob, like a leaf on a lake,
With eyes-closed-sweat-dripping-into-a-joyous-river-
As-I-whoop-and ooooh yea yea yea drunken abandon.
The bar closes, and I am sent out the spit hole
Of the sax onto the cigarette butt floor.

****

Brian Carlson

TO BECOME THE OTHER

It's the hope of the old
to depend on its leaders

It's the wish of the young
to create a new being

It's the death of both
to become the other

****

Bob Loewe

ODDITIES

Long scar marks
streak his hardhat,
face smeared with soot,
Clothing capable of walking by itself.
He walks from the furnace,
expressionless.
Averaging two fights daily,
smiles seldom break his face.
He sits on the ninety-seven degree shade
and cools off
while subordinates spill out--
taller, paler, lighter hair.
He stands out
with thick dark curls.
Never really fit.
Considered half Jewish here,
half Christian by old acquaintances,
the titular leader,
straw boss--
leadership learned by necessity.
Fight him and lose.
Debate and lose.
Hard to best someone
Who has fought for every piece of ground
he has walked--
wrought by nature,
tempered in the glow of the steel mills,
a product of his environment.

****

Nels Nelson

RIDICULOUSNESS

She came to me in my sleep one night
And kissed me on the cheek.
She said, "I can't see you anymore,
My folks think you're a freak."
She left my bed, left me for dead.
The walls came crashin down
My life destroyed that dreary night
Because I looked just like a clown.
So I changed my life,
I dressed just right,
I made 'em stop and stare.
They didn't know that down below
I spiked my pubic hair.
I played their game,
It was pretty lame,
But I beat them after a while.
Now I walk around this tiny town
Wearing nothing but a smile.

****

Maria Mellinger

AFTER THEY HAD TAKEN HER AWAY

After they had taken her away
I looked through the
Crazy woman's wardrobe
And found it to be so
Similar
To my own.

****

Brian Carlson

FREUD'S DELIGHT

Freud's Delight

Sometimes
that's all I think about
shotglass imagery
Oedipus Wrecked

Strange
that Mother
isn't here

On the couch
for another session

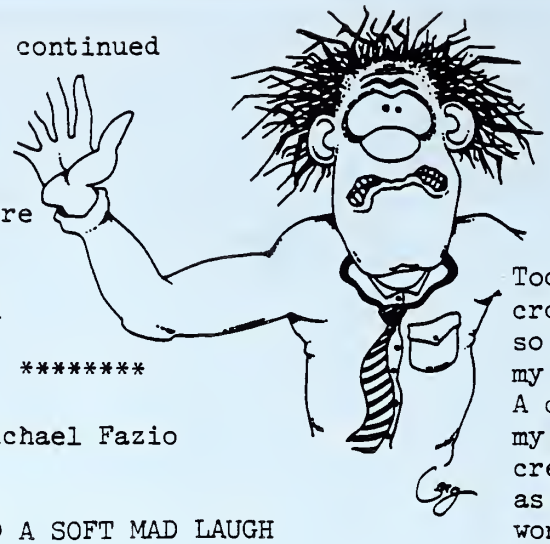
(continued)

Freud's Delight, continued

with the clock

I'm surprised
I didn't lose more
than I did

Speaking my mind



****

Michael Fazio

I HEARD A SOFT MAD LAUGH

I heard a soft mad laugh.
It told me to dream,
So I dreamt.
Then I thought:
I knew the guitar sang,
the whiskey meditated,
the girl satisfied
and I related.

The fire burnt
the wing flied
the dice rolled
and I cried

The coat warmed
the trees blew
the love grew
and I flew

Then the birds began to cry
and I decided it was time to die
My life was good
but very sad
Now it's over
and I'm glad

****

Amy Jo

SAY IT BIZARRE

condemnation
then salvation
mere hallucination
(say it)
heaven awaits me
when I die
or is it hell?
they could have lied

(say it)
go west
no PLACE in particular
pick a yellow brick
road to follow
there are many

****

Judy Belfield

TO ABSTRACTION

Too many thinks
crowd my contemplater;
so loaded over
my head-holder trembles.
A deadly cumbersome-strosity this,
my silent bellower roars:
creates the din of pen-scratch
as my fingers scalp-scratch
wondermeant.
Befuddledly, I gaze agape
like some slobbering happy
brain-bereft impossibility.
I consult my consideration
in the third-person singular--
she suggests I make do without her.
I slink away all
transparently bemused
recognizing the preposterity
of afterthought.

****

John Schmitz

OUTSIDE HIMSELF

Raining carnage and the cackle of crows
Startle and stink my sterilized dome of
heaven
Yet a million miles below
I lay in a dead sleep of milk and silk
And honey-sweet vomit licking my lips,
While my fugitive mind indulges in eternal
Morphine dreams--mere shadows of the cruel
colors above.
My fervent fire is a sun dressed in
sackcloth and ash
My white-washed moon, morose
Shooting stars suicide themselves into
The merciless motion of the ocean
Yet of the virtues, I boast three:
Peace and Justice and Harmony.

****

Elise Wylie Boucher

AT THE CRAZY HORSE

There is nothing for you in the drink you
clutch
No solace, no faith, no love
Just a numbing dullness
That packs away your pain for the night
The Dancer crosses the Floor
And the night outside hides the ugliness
of your life
Voices in the street seem eerie
And each drink lies to you a little more
Flourescent light reflects across your
sweating, desperate face

Life slipped away while you weren't looking
Leaving you with an alcohol lover--
No Magic Potion, that.

****

Amy Jo

WELCOME TO HELL

Hellooo, baby!
you're gonna burn
rot
suffocate
choke to death
on the love I make,

****

Wayne Ceranek

SAVIOR

Mist enshrouded forest
Stumbling, groping
Which path sould I take
Scholar, Author, None of the above
Then SHE comes
An angel, yet not one
SHE takes my hand
leads the way
just when I see a light
I lose my grip
Fog swirls in
Can't find her
Enclosed in darkness
Alone
Stagnating
Darkness

****

Kim Vollmer

CONFUSION

confusion
always running away from something
a person--a feeling--a situation
a state of mind
unstable, undecided
even when I close my eyes
I end up opening them again.

****

Bob Loewe

WELCOME TO THE BLACK OF MY MIND

Welcome to the black of my mind
Where festered things
With rheumy wings
Fly in and out
Of decomposing memories
And compost piles of emotion,
Where icor drips and runs
Into pools,
Fermenting as it trickles down
Through synapses
And collects again
Into clear bubbling pools,
Condensing over time.
It is then gathered
and spun into yarns.

****

David Sullivan

GOD'S BEST GIFT

Night's quiet
Stars shine high
Baby brews inside
Touch your tummy

Loves flames inside
Our baby's alive
We both cry
Blessing are met

One half white
One half black
All faculties intact
All full of love

(continued)

Hold each other
So much beauty
But time's soon
No shame there

We bear a child together
Inside and outside
God's best gift
The eternal bond
Is finally rooting

****

John Schmitz

EVOLUTION

Bronze-baked cave
Of ash
Cake
Soot
Shake sanctuary
Neanderthal maddening monstrous moon
Soon
He awakes
And contemplates the cumulus clouds that
loom about
Only to shout,
"What's for dinner?!"

****

Anna Danbury

ADULT NAIVETE

Will you never lie to me,
To gain my love and trust?
Will you never tell me lines,
Like "I'll take care of us?"
Will you have some faith in me,
Even if I fail?
Will you give your love to me,
And let our love prevail?
Will you never preach to me,
About what love's supposed to be?
Will you never boast my ego,
With words like "you're everything to me"?
Will you keep me by your side,
And not go after another in greed?
Will you give me a shoulder for crying?
And everything I <u>really</u> need?
And most of all my sweetheart,
Will you never tire of me?

****

Bob Loewe

GRATITUDE

I really must thank you
for teaching me all the things
my parents neglected--
like lying,
cheating,
stealing,
getting by on
as little work as possible.
How to fight,
argue,
bicker
over everything and nothing.
The inner workings of
prejudice,
hate,
intolerance,
to keep my mouth shut
and blend into the crowd.
That intelligence
is rewarded with
animosity,
and originality
is taboo.
The four-year-old who started
knew none of these things--
"How the world works!"
You gave me understanding
and so I thank you--
The American Educational System.

****

Nels Nelson

IT HAPPENS EVERY DAY

As I sit in my bathroom,
Pulling over-cooked-noodles-coated-in-
thirty-weight-motor-oil
Boogers from my very receptive nostrils,
Which I then smear on the side of the bowl
Like mashed earthworms on a spring-rain
driveway,
I often ask myself if Princess Diana or
Nancy Reagan
Smear their boogers on the side of their
thrones.

****

wordeater 67

Amy Jo

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

the light has dawned
I have seen the truth
the crumbling fountain
this vision of youth
my body's below me
I rise to the sky
drifting forever
my soul up on high
deep inside this world
burns a dark dream
trapped in strange ice
oh, what I have seen.

****

Karen Lombardo

COMING OF AGE

The seven individual stories within The Unvanquished can be viewed as the development of Bayard from childhood to mature adult. Faulkner adds the dimension of civil war and its death of "the old order" of the South to intensify the struggle Bayard faces in coming to terms with the meaning of courage and living with one's moral convictions.

In "Ambuscade," we see Bayard as an innocent, carefree boy of twelve who plays at war with no concept of the real issues involved in the war which surrounds him. Bayard sees nothing wrong in the social order. You could even say he didn't realize things were different in the North. Ringo, his playmate, didn't appear to him as a slave but a friend. Life was a game, and even the shooting at the Yankee soldier was more a childish prank. If Bayard truly understood the code of the times, which he didn't, an ambush would have been out of the question.

Progressing through the next three stories, "Retreat," "Raid," and "Riposte in Tertio," Bayard becomes more responsible and participates in fewer childish pranks. From "Retreat" when Ringo and Bayard race off after the mules leaving Granny stranded, which shows little maturity, to "Riposte in Tertio" with the warning of Granny against Ab Snopes, Bayard becomes more grown up. He is starting to become aware of life and finally Bayard is faced with the task of avenging Granny's death by the renegade Grumby.

"Vendee" is Bayard's "rite of passage which brings him into adulthood. Since Colonel Sartoris isn't around to carry out his duty as prescribed by the code of the South, the responsibility becomes Bayard's. Through his experiences and trials in war he has been forced to mature well beyond his fifteen years. We see this when Bayard is able to size up Ab Snope's character by watching his eyes.

The time involved in tracking Grumby is also important. It takes two to three months, which shows this ability to finish what is started. We haven't seen a rise of Bayard's moral convictions which is evident in the manner the boys deal with Grumby's death and afterwards his body. Although Faulkner doesn't dwell on the gruesome acts performed, nailing up the body and placing the severed hand on Granny's marker, the killing of Grumby is just Bayard's adherin to the "old order" of the South.

"Skirmish at Sartoris" is the beginning of Bayard's moral development. Up to this point Bayard has been forced by the chaos of the war to mature; now he begins to assimilate his own moral beliefs and standards. The people of Yoknapatawpha County want law and order, but a law and order based on "the old social order." Bayard is confused with the women's concerns over Drusilla, his father's acts of retaliation, and the place Blacks have in this "new society."

Bayard's final test comes in "An Odor of Verbena." In "Vendee," his manhood was tested by avenging Granny's murder, now it has become his responsibility to seek revenge against Ben Redmond for his father's death. The old social order insists on "an eye for an eye" but Bayard has his doubts; "at least this will be my chance to find out if I'm what I think I am or if I just hope; if I'm going to do what I have taught myself is right or if I am just going to wish I were."

Bayard has rejected his father's and his neighbors' values. He can not justify how they voice their ideas for betterment of country when they are guilty of murdering those who are opposed. When those murdered are called "carpet-

(continued)

baggers," "Northerners," and "foreigners," Bayard points out that those murdered "were men, Human beings."

Bayard has not only grown to manhood by means of age but through courage to face his responsibilities and adopting moral values that he stands by. He does not throw away the "old order" but rises above it with his own code of law and order.

****

Elise Wylie Boucher

1979

Happy birthday Sweet Sixteen
Momma gave me a daisy and a rose
I sought some symbolism
In the gift,
But no,
She gave them only because
I liked them

Then.

But oh, sixteen was gone long ago
And I can barely
Remember it now

I found the flowers, forgotten,
Dried in a dry book

They crumbled away
As I touched them
And I laughed so that
I would not cry

Certainly, there was
Symbolism in that.

****

Maria Mellinger

RECORDS

Records go 'round in a circle unbroken
Like a marble rolling through your mind,
Turning over cobwebs like a music box key,
Allowing the brain to rewind.
The fine black line, the spiral on vinyl,
Whispers words to the subconscious ear,
But it's only a groove in a plastic disc
That through the miracle of vibrations we hear.

****

Nels Nelson

TELEVISION

Buried in the cobwebbed attic of my mind,
Beneath boxes of pictures I will never
have time to look at,
Is a story about a child I don't remember
much of anymore.
This boy's greatest concerns were whether
he ran faster
Wearing his tennis shoes, or his new double-
day deluxe buckle up
shoes,
And if he'd wet his pants on the first day
of school.
A boy who never knew his father would
emotionally abandon him.
He did typical, little boy things, and led
a television boy life.
He never knew he'd end up turning his emo-
tions off to everyone,
Fearing he could no longer control them.
How could he know that he would change
from the happy,
sitcom boy
To the lost young man drifting from channel
to channel before
Being cancelled, his only home being late
night reruns?

****

Amy Jo

BIERE"33" EXPORT

I had a biere
Vietnamese, mind you
maybe a case
I looked around
lo and behold!
there's the door
I crawled outside
and shared my insides
with the lawn
I found my car
slipping and sliding
just like Ace
(though not too frehley
based, IF you know what I mean)
I lit three smokes
my hair, too
triple vision, dude
I kissed the windshield

(continued)

Biere "33" Export, continued

passionately
though we'd been just friends
I embraced the pavement
viciously
his red smile said, THANKS
I met Later cruising
down the block
he said, HEY
I saw my soul dancing
in the street
he said, LATER, BABE
ah, I pity those whom
my affection's bestowed
when I have a biere.

****

Paul Pritchett

DEALERMAN

You don't walk down this street.
Don't come around this side of town.
I got a sickness only
death can cure.
I've come to see the
dealerman.

****

WARLEATER

Bob Loewe

DOMESTIC STUDIES

How can time pass so slowly?
The professor's droning voice
Rolls along with no passion,
No emotion.
Checking your watch
every thirty seconds,
you pray for the clock
To jump magically to ten,
Granting a reprieve from
Hell?
Perhaps it is!
Long, hot, boring,
And destined to go on forever.
"Yaaaaawwwwwwwwwnnnnnnnnn."
"Sorry."
Starting to wonder
If horns sprout
From this boring man's head.
Is there an imp
In his briefcase?
Oh! He told a joke!
What joy!
Pbbbbbbbbbbbbbbbb!!!!!!!!!!
Kelly has nice legs though.
"Sorry, can you repeat the question?"
"The answer's four."
"You're welcome."
I always did like miniskirts.
"What?"
"Complimentary goods.--
"How about miniskirts and pantyhose?
"How about marijuana and rolling papers?
"Gin and olives?
"Beer and pretzels?"
He liked that one.
Figures.
That took up five minutes.
Yes, Kelly has nice legs,
But Christy's aren't bad either.
An hour and a half left.
Dear Governor, grant me a pardon.
I'm suffering!
Caffeine withdrawal!
Let's doodle in the margins
And write on the desk.
No! I will behave!
I'll flirt with Kelly!!
Isn't it amazing how fast time goes?

****

Alice Pecararo

THE FAMILY

Caretakers of things,
never touching, fondling their
collectables.
Bone white china,
bone white skeletons,
baked, bleached, fragile,
and unyielding.
They do not touch,
do not feel.
Love and passion are manufactured
scenarios, movie scripts, an illusi
The Mother reigns...
governor of an indifferent constituenc
She spends her days counting
porcelain jars, and dusting
silver settings.

(continued)

Her husband...
shapes his portfolio, acquisitions.
Options, things he has, can sell for profit,
buyer of antiquities...
a giver of brass.
Their nights are spent beside each
other, back to back, sharing nothing
but their king size arid space and
the Great American Dream.
They have two sons...
The eldest follows in his father's
shoes, blinking his eyes in rapid
rhythm to the coiling and unwinding of
his nervous gut...and adds the daily take
upon his spiritual tote board.
The youngest buys designer jeans, and sporty
cars, and talks from one side of his mouth
on the nobility of the poor.
They are the collectors of things, the care-
takers.
They dine on bone white china, flawless, but
for the unseen fissures, just beneath the
surface. Handle with care...China breaks so
easily

Nels Nelson

****

POPPA

As you stared with vacant eyes,
Looking through my problems as I stood in your
sight,
Hiding in the corners to stay out of the light.
I began to notice that when I was in pain,
you'd take flight.

You polluted me with your lies,
Promising to be around to hear my screams.
But you were only present in my dreams,
And I would have to deal solely with my plight.

You always turned from my cries,
And quickly walked out the door,
Refusing to be in my life anymore.
Always vanishing into the night.

So, Daddy, as your soul rolls over and dies,
And you stay away when I fall to the ground,
I now know that you will never be around,
And when I trip, I'll have to get back up using my own might.

****

Maria Mellinger

I LOST MY FATHER WHEN I FELL IN LOVE

I lost my father when I fell in love.
I could no longer be his little girl,
His "Little Buddha."
We couldn't hold hands in the supermarket
Or share a winter coat at the Veterans'
Day Parade.
We had secrets to keep, now,
And cold suspicions.
There might be love hidden in his anger,
Or perhaps pain,
But true feelings are bundled under layers
of pride,
And not even a warm breeze
Could strip the woolen injury
From his heart.

****

A REPLY

You're so smug with your words.
I've given you everything I could,
And you hit me with this.
I never had the chance to go to college,
But don't tell me I'm stupid.
I've done my best;
No one told me how to be a father.
I was never taught ho to talk to a son.
A part of me had to die
So that I could help you be you.
If you look at yourself, you'll notice that
You've never let the sun shine on your
emotions either.
Don't you know how?
It hurts to be so alone in the dark
Without a flashlight, doesn't it?
If you study yourself,
You will see that you are a mirror of me.

Bob Loewe

POPS

I see you,
your science books,
chemicals, balances, and scopes,
knowing each microorganism,
the innerworkings of anatomy,
how my mind workd,
blood pumps,
muscles move,
and nerves fire.
To you
calculus is basic mathematics.
It and physics
you use as tools,
as I use a drywall hammer.
You don't doodle in words,
drawing pictures like a child
in chalk on the sidewalk
as I do.
You don't understand me
any more than I do you.
I see Mandelbrote
as just a goldfish
and fractals
are color pictures.
While you tell the world
how the tree grows,
I sit in its shade
puzzling, puzzling,
how the apple landed
so far from its source.

****

Nels Nelson

TOILET TRAINING

Billy was two when his parents toilet-trained him. His father said to him, "Bill, you are going to take a giant step towards manhood today," held out the Sunday newspaper, and pointed in the direction of the bathroom. Little Billy took the paper with the firm grip of an indestructible youngster, and strolled to the toilet. Once he got inside the bathroom, Billy discovered a few obstacles he would have to conquer before he could achieve his main goal.

First, he had to figure out a way to mount the bowl. After pondering the situation for a few minutes, he decided that the best way to tame this particular beast would be with the aid of a ladder. He ran out to the garage, came back with his father's sixteen foot, aluminum extension ladder, leaned it against the tank, and began the tiresome climb to the top of the toilet.

After two hours, he reached his objective and was staring into the mouth of the bowl. Following a brief congratulatory period, Billy looked bravely into the face of his next opponent. He had to figure out the proper way t seat himself.

He started out sitting Indian style, but decided that that just wouldn't do. He then pulled his knees up to his chest and rested his feet on the seat. "No," said Billy, "this can't be right either." Little Billy pulled on his thinking cap. While he was thinking, his legs fell to either side of the bowl. Realizing this, Billy pulled himself out of his thoughts and started to pull his legs back up. "Wait," cried Billy, "this must be it! It is comfortable, and my buttocks are spread in such a way so as to facilitate the process. Oh how Billy beamed with pride.

Billy then opened the newspaper, and began his business. During his excretion, Billy looked at all the pictures in the paper. "Surely this will be more of a comfort once I can read, but the pictures will do for now."

When he was finished, Billy faced one final dilemma. He remembered Mother and Father running a cloth across his bottom befor to clean him off, but now that he was on his own what would he do? The answer, of course, was at his feet. For at Little Billy's feet was a rug encircling the base of the toilet. He sat down and scooched his little bottom around until it burned with cleanliness.

He had done it. Little Billy had successfully fought with manhood, and he was the victor. He walked out of the bathroom and into the living room where his parents were sitting, and, wiping the sweat from his forehead, tossed the newspaper at his father's feet.

****

Michael Fazio

BEAUTIFUL WATERS RUN FREE

Beautiful waters run free
Ancient mystics live by the sea.

The wild child runs through dawn

(continued)

Beautiful Waters Run Free, continued

The wild earth with wild fawn

Negroes dancing by fire lights
Worship gods in eternal flight

Naked men filled with desire
Naked women from the misty mire

Angels fly on midnight's beam
To deliver our lives in a dream

****

Maria Mellinger

IN A DIRTY COFFEE SHOP

She sat in a dirty coffee shop.
Her mistake sat next to her.
It had soft brown eyes
And light brown hair
Much like she did long ago
Before reality stole the individuality away.
The mistake gurgled,
Wanting attention,
And she turned to face it yet again.

****

Maria Mellinger

"AND THAT'S WHY I DON'T EAT GRAVY"

6:00 p.m. Four tables left to clear. It was one of those working nights that made me want to quit my job at the nursing home and crawl under the covers for a century or two, but instead of bolting for the door, I stacked the half-empty plates of chicken stew, bowls of soup, and dishes of multi-colored jello squares.

A woman with twelve-inch thick glasses insisted that the chicken soup I served her earlier was in fact, tomato, and I was after her, and why? What had she ever done to me? Another woman was convinced that I put almond cookies at her table so that she would choke on hidden nut shells, and why? Always. It was always "Why?"

I feared I might be institutionalized myself at any minute... for murder.

I continued clearing.

Rose Legrand boldly approached me; I presumed to yell at me again for bringing her the wrong dinner half an hour ago. She put a hand on my shoulder and said, "Honey, I am sorry about tonight. I just can't eat food with gravy. Never could."

I nodded, upset with the many others who had complained about this or that. "You know," she continued, "my mother never added gravy to our foods at home, and she was an excellent cook! Of course, that was long before the days of the cholesterol scare or the nuclear threat,

(continued)

Betty Burns Zacate

CACTI A LA ICE

After a winter storm
the armored amazons
of the desert
sheathe their daggers
in irridescent crystalline,
and then become
benign beauties
with exotic arms
seducing innocence
to embrace
forbidden ecstasies
in an ephemeral
fantasy
ending with Siren songs.

****

Paul Pritchett

TOAST

From coast to coast
I don't like to boast
Just gimme some bread
and I'll make toast!

I like toast.
I make toast.
I eat toast.

When I'm on the clock.
Just stick em in the slot,
and the wires get hot.
I've got toast!

I love toast!
Jelly and toast.
Butter and toast.
I like toast!

****

but she watched our diets like a mother bird watches a tom cat."

"It's okay, Rose," I answered. "It's just been a long night."

"Oh, of course," she smiled. "I remember my working days. Seven to seven in a factory and my fingers turned green from handling gun powder. Daddy joked my fingernails would explode if I tapped them on the kitchen table. But our boys were at war, and it was the least I could do. And then I knitted stocking caps for the soldiers once I got home each night. Barely time for a bite to eat, I had, but I imagine it was cold in Europe...

"You know, I knitted a cap for that little boy that lived up the street from us in the 40's. What was his name? Oh bother, it was Johnny Irish-Something-or-Other. Brightest red hair you ever did see. Why once, I was just sitting in my kitchen, and I saw that red hair flash past my window and darn it if those blacks weren't right behind him."

"Oh?" I asked, trying to be polite, but wanting to finish my job. I moved to pick up some soup bowls behind me and Rose's arm, which had been hanging limp at her side after she let go of my shoulder, jumped up and caught my arm.

"Well, sure! They were chasing him. The Black Stone Rangers, they called themselves, and they had a crowd of young kids wanting to join the gang. They had to kill a white boy to get in."

"Oh, no," I said in mock seriousness. I didn't mean to be rude, but I was exploding inside, and I didn't want anyone to notice. I had to get out of there, but her grip on my arm was tight as the drama of her life was relived.

"Yes, yes! Well, I went straight out my door and grabbed Johnny Irish by that shock of red hair and pulled him into my house. I called the police and the Irish family and gave the boy some soup. Oh, how he cried. I expect in today's world we both would have been shot.

"But that was years ago," she said, and let go of my arm. She smiled, turned as if to go, and then wondered aloud, "What's Johnny doing now? I'll bet he looks just like JFK. Why, I could introduce you two!"

I didn't tell her that Johnny Irish was most probably my father's age. I tried to smile, nodded, and exploded some more. Then I picked up the soup bowls that had been lurking behind me forever.

"Darn it, how we'd dance at the Trailmar. I had so many beaus. So many, many boys in love with me. And the dances! Oh!" Rose shuffled her reinforced toe stocking feet. "Do you dance?"

"No," I replied. "I'm too busy killing myself," I thought.

"Oh, you must, you must!" She clapped her hands like a little child. "At the Aragon. It only costs a dime at the Aragon."

"I don't know, Rose. I work a lot," I answered. "I can't dance." I can't live, I thought. I can't breathe.

"Oh, honey," she said. Her eyes teared as if she felt my unavoidable, unexplainable pain. "It's easy," she whispered. "Watch!"

She shuffled her feet again in an arthritic, old-fashioned dance. "I never married, though," she continued, joining the ongoing conversation in her mind. "Don't get married, honey. There's so much to do, you shouldn't have to worry about making potatoes and gravy for some man."

She giggled. "I suppose you could find time for a man every now and then, right?"

"Right," I pretended to laugh, while another chunk of my insides was reduced to a fine splatter. There was no explanation.

"Sure, sure," she said, snapping me back into reality. "You know, sometimes I wish I could be like those crazy ones--the ones who don't remember." Rose pointed to the celing, indicating the second floor of the nursing home, where people were sent when they became senile or lost their will to go on. I sometimes wished I was on the second floor, too, staring out a window until the nurses tucked me into bed.

"They just sit there," she went on, "being taken care of. And here I am, always thinking and thinking. Why can't I forget the operas and plays and how it felt to brush my own hair? Where's the dignity in merely remembering?

"I'm useless now. I've settled like a pebble in a sandbar. Theres no explanation. The only wave that can wash me away is death."

Or an explosion, I thought, and watched her walk out the door and into the hallway.

****

Alice Pecararo

INVENTIONS

The phone stares back at me with
   antique white indifference
It doesn't know, or vaguely care the
   hellish torment it's imposed on me!
Please ring, damned plastic
   stoic white invention
      of the telephonic age!
It's cold beneath the quilted blue cocoon
I've wrapped around my anxious skin and
I need to talk with him tonight,
   need conversation
      contact
         solace
            Don't you understand?
The room needs painting....
Tomorrow's Friday....
Scattered thoughts to keep the mind from
   fixing on the need to hear the phone.
It rings, and someone wants to sell me
   magazine subscriptions....
They've intruded on my sanity and the fragile
   thread that keeps my head intact becomes a
                little frayed...
And tomorrow
   if he calls...
      he'll say, "hello, how are you?"
I'll probably forget tonight
   and just say
      fine
         I'm all right
            I'm all right
               I'm...

****

Nels Nelson

AND SO IT GOES

I unhung
My ideals,
Which I lost
Faith in,
But she just
Came and took
My hand.
So I had to
Hang one back
Up.
But I'm sure
I'll be taking it down
Again soon.

****

Amy Jo

WRITER'S BLACK

black on black
an awakening
screaming shadows
the Reaper's sting

hollow echoes
triumphant screech
hungry whispers
a final breach

hidden violence
man's uncovering
sweet, sweet laughter
hear death sing

****

Elise Wylie Boucher

I RAN BLINDLY

I ran blindly
And burnt my proverbial bridges
Before I ever thought.

Too late now.

I have changed
And I doubt the girl
I remember myself to be
Ever existed,
For I cannot prove her now.

What remains behind me?
Memories singed into others' minds
of a girl they once knew?
Hearts and lives
Broken begun changed
All away from my sight...
Does my memory ever
Stir in its slumber
In another's mind?
Or shall I return
To see a remembered face
Coolly pass me by
   Knowing me not at all.

****

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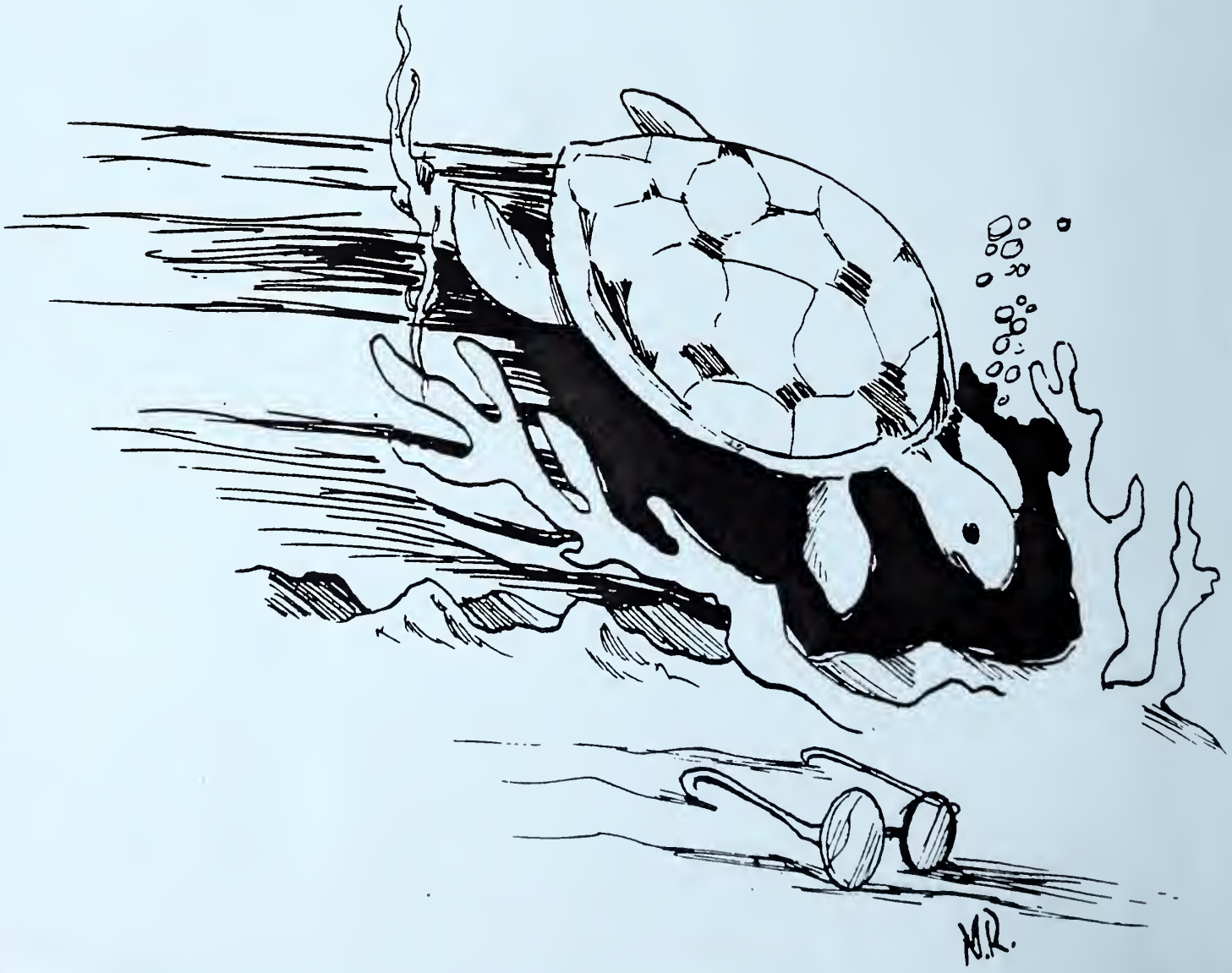
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